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Message Text

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DRAFTED BY USOAS:TETAYLOR/ATP
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TO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 035133

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OAS, PFOR
SUBJECT: SAPENA PASTOR'S CANDIDACY FOR OAS SECRETARY GENERAL
REFERENCE: ASUNCION 573

1. YOUR HANDLING OF SAPENA'S APPROACH WAS COMMENDABLE. JUST THE RIGHT MIXTURE OF SYMPATHY AND FRANKNESS.

2. YOU MAY INFORM SAPENA PASTOR THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WILL DECIDE HOW TO VOTE FOR OAS SECRETARY GENERAL ONLY AFTER ALL THE LIKELY CANDIDATES ARE IN THE FIELD, ALWAYS CONSIDERING FIRST THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM AS A WHOLE. IDEALLY WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A DISTINGUISHED CANDIDATE WITH SUPPORT TANTAMOUNT TO CONSENSUS. AT THE VERY LEAST, THE NEXT SECRETARY GENERAL SHOULD HAVE BROAD SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE HEMISPHERE. WE CERTAINLY DO NOT WANT TO SAY THAT WE COULD NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES SUPPORT SAPENA PASTOR. HE IS A MAN OF MANY VIRTUES AND PROVEN EXPERIENCE. BUT WE CANNOT AVOID DRAWING THE SAME CONCLUSIONS WHICH HE
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SEEMS TO HAVE DRAWN. THE CHANCES OF HIS OBTAINING THE

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TWELVE VOTES NECESSARY FOR ELECTION SEEM TO BE EXTREMELY SMALL. AND SHOULD HE BE ELECTED, HIS ABILITY TO OFFER EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP WOULD PROBABLY BE QUITE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, SUCH AS IN THE CASE OF CUBA SANCTIONS.

3. YOU SHOULD SUGGEST TO SAPENA PASTOR THAT, WHILE WE CANNOT ENCOURAGE HIS CANDIDACY, HE SHOULD NOT RUSH HEADLONG INTO A DECISION. YOU MIGHT POINT OUT THAT SEVERAL COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN VERY LOYAL IN HIS CAMPAIGN, AND HE MIGHT WISH TO TALK WITH AT LEAST ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL BEFORE MAKING ANY FINAL DECISION.

4. FINALLY, YOU SHOULD INQUIRE WHAT COURSE PARAGUAY WOULD TAKE IF HE SHOULD DROP OUT OF THE RACE. WE ARE NOT OPPOSING GOMEZ BERGES, BUT SOME LATINS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY DO NOT THINK HE HAS SUFFICIENT EXPERIENCE FOR THE JOB. IF INDEED SAPENA DOES DECIDE TO WITHDRAW, WE WOULD VALUE VERY HIGHLY HIS VIEWS ON WHO THE NEXT SECRETARY GENERAL SHOULD BE.

5. FYI ONLY. SAPENA'S COUNT OF HIS OWN SUPPORT SEEMS PRETTY ACCURATE. HE MAY BE A BIT OPTIMISTIC IN COUNTING HAITI, AND AS NOTED IN STATE 19801 EL SALVADOR IS WAVERING. THERE WOULD BE SOME DANGER SHOULD SAPENA SUDDENLY DROP OUT. THERE IS AN OUTSIDE CHANCE THAT SEVERAL OF SAPENA PASTOR'S VOTES WOULD FALL QUICKLY TO GOMEZ BERGES, WHO WOULD THEN HAVE THE REQUIRED MAJORITY. WE WOULD LIKE SAPENA TO RELEASE HIS SUPPORTERS FROM HIS CANDIDACY, BUT PERHAPS A BIT LATER WHEN THERE ARE OTHER CANDIDATES TO ABSORB HIS SUPPORT. FOR EXAMPLE, ORFILA IS MUCH DISCUSSED HERE, AND IF ARGENTINA KNEW IT WAS GOING TO BE RELEASED FROM ITS COMMITMENT TO SAPENA IT MIGHT SPONSOR AN ORFILA CANDIDACY. END FYI. INGERSOLL

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